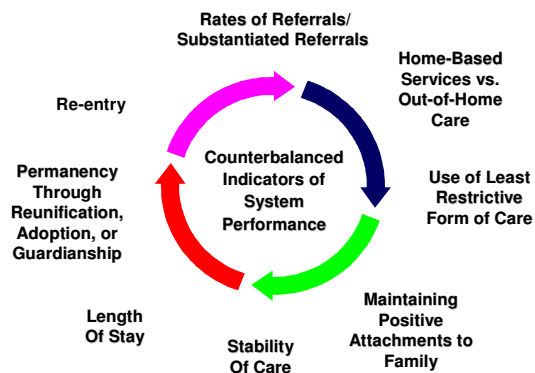


Data are Your Friends: Using Outcome Information to Improve Child Welfare Services

Any particular measure, viewed in isolation, tells you nothing useful about county performance.

The Cycle of Experiences in the Child Welfare System*



* Adapted from: Usher, C.L., Wildfire, J.B., Gogan, H.C. & Brown, E.L. (2002).
Measuring Outcomes in Child Welfare. Chapel Hill: Jordan Institute for Families

- Start at the beginning (e.g., rate of children with referrals) and examine outcomes around the “cycle of experiences.”
- Determine which outcomes (possibly for which subgroups) are “high priorities” and “high performances” within your own county:
 - Examine differences between kin and non-kin placements.
 - Analyze age, gender, and particularly ethnic disparities.
- Review performance trends over time (e.g., you may be a “high priority” county compared to others, but have been steadily improving over the past several years). Consider the relationships between outcome measures.
 - Has the number and rate of entries changed over the past several years?
 - Has this impacted proportion of children reunified within 12 months?
 - Has this impacted the proportion of reunified children who reenter care?
- Identify linkages between outcomes and practice processes.

Process changes lead to outcome changes